



Changes Needed in State Education Funding



It was disheartening that another General Assembly session has passed with no significant action being taken to support local K-12 education. This means that cities, rather than the state, will once again be carrying an even greater share of the financial load for education funding.

The Legislature's own watchdog agency, the Joint Legislative Audit Review Commission (JLARC), said in a 2001 report that localities are providing significantly more funding than they should have to. For Lynchburg taxpayers, this translates into \$9 million every year that could otherwise be used to provide other essential services.

Here's an overview of the General Assembly's actions over the past two sessions regarding direct aid to education:

On the "plus" side

- In the early 1990s, the burden of funding local school districts' administrative staffs had inadvertently been switched to the localities. However, even after this error was discovered, decisions were made to continue the practice—to the financial benefit of the state and the detriment of localities. Following the JLARC report, the state has taken some action, but is still only picking up two-thirds of these costs.

- Many localities have, over the years, taken on fundraising initiatives to pay for school services and supplies. In response, the state's attitude has traditionally been that school districts that do this will receive less state funding. In other words, schools were being penalized for trying to raise essential funds. Following the JLARC report, that practice has ceased and schools are no longer penalized.

On the "minus" side:

To help pay for these actions the state embarked on the following funding plans:

- It reduced General Funds contributions to teacher retirement by \$130 million.
- In addition, the State diverted dollars that would normally be provided to less-affluent communities for school construction, and channeled these funds—instead

of General Funds—towards teacher retirement. These dollars in the past were designed to help localities receive low-cost loans for school construction and maintenance. Now, without these funds, cities will pay higher interest rates on these loans—a burden that ultimately falls to local citizens.

- Funds were also cut for "at-risk" educational programs. Lynchburg and other urban areas have a higher percentage of at-risk students. This means the financial load to Lynchburg citizens will be even more pronounced. The funding for such essential programs as K-3 reduced class size, drop-out prevention, programs for at-risk 4-year-olds, and SOL training for teachers, will become even more of a challenge.

The findings from the JLARC report were simply too blatant and too difficult to ignore. And so, as one onlooker put it, it now appears as though the contents of one pocket have been used to fill the needs of another pocket. That is absolutely right.

But, regrettably, the situation is even worse. Anyone looking closely at the numbers will realize that, somewhere in the translation, there is now \$66 million less in General Funds for local K-12 education than what was available at the last biennium.

Our children are our future. At the local level, we know what needs to be done for their benefit. We therefore have two choices:

1. We can continue with these policies that have led Virginia to be ranked 40th in the nation in state aid per pupil; or
2. We can insist that our state leaders take bold, decisive actions—actions that will assure that our local schools receive the funding they deserve.

If you feel strongly about this, you may want to contact your state legislators.

Senator Stephen Newman
P.O. Box 2209
Lynchburg, VA 24501
TEL: 434-385-1065

Delegate Preston Bryant
P.O. Box 3589
Lynchburg, VA 24503
TEL: 434-528-1097

IMPORTANT BILLING INFORMATION

Water Utility Residential Customers

Seasonal Sewer Cap Begins

(Effective with April usage billed on your May statement)

During the months of April-September, many Lynchburg residents use water to water lawns, fill swimming pools, wash cars, etc. Water used in this manner does not enter the sewer system and, therefore, does not have to be treated. The sewer portion of your water bill is based on your actual water consumption. However, from May-October the residential utility water bills charge for sewer using the "sewer cap" calculation. The sewer cap is based upon your average water consumption during the billing months of November-April. The sewer portion of your bill will reflect either the actual consumption or your "sewer cap," whichever is less. You should not notice a significant increase in the sewer portion of your bill. Remember, "sewer cap" applies to usage for April-September which is billed May-October. Only single family residential customers connected to the City's sewer system are affected by sewer cap billing. If you have any questions regarding the sewer cap, please call the Billing and Collections Division at 847-1320. Thank you.

Brush and Bulk Pickup Service

One Call Does It All For City Residents!

Just call 856-CITY (2489) for your brush and bulk pickup requests. Phone calls are taken weekdays from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. After you call and receive a scheduled brush and bulk pickup date, place your brush and bulk items on the curb in front of your residence. Please place items out the day before your scheduled pickup, since the crew might come as early as 7:00 a.m. on your scheduled day.

There are certain things you can do to better prepare your brush and bulk items prior to your scheduled pickup. Please keep the following in mind:

- Keep brush and bulk items separate.
- Brush items include twigs and branches (*excluding piles of leaves*).
- Bulk items include furniture, appliances, televisions, etc.
- Place items on the curb in front of your residence. Do not put items near trees or telephone poles.
- Break up brush and bundle it into pieces less than 8 ft. long. Limbs should be no larger than 3 in. diameter.
- Make sure bulk items are not too large (*two people should be able to carry the items*).
- Freon items, such as air conditioners, refrigerators and freezers, are required by law to be kept separate from other



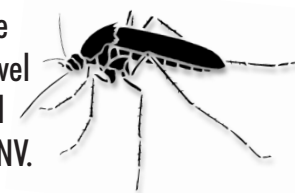
bulk items and are picked up on Wednesdays ONLY.

- Leaves are not eligible for brush and bulk collection. Leaves are picked up for free during designated dates in the fall. If you need to dispose of leaves at other times, just bag and tag them with a 95-cent trash tag.

NOTE: Please call 856-CITY for seasonal leaf pick-up dates.

Remember West Nile Virus?

Every year seems to bring some new health scare or concern. Last year, the West Nile Virus (WNV) grabbed everyone's attention, both on a national level and here in Lynchburg. WNV might be last year's news, but the threat is still valid. Please read below to find out how you can protect yourself against WNV.



What is West Nile Virus infection?

The West Nile Virus infection is one that is spread by the bite of infected mosquitoes and usually causes a mild illness, but may also cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord). This virus is named after the West Nile region of Uganda where the virus was first isolated in 1937. It caused an outbreak in New York in 1999.

How does one get the West Nile Virus infection?

Anyone can get the West Nile Virus infection if bitten by an infected mosquito; however, even in areas where transmission of West Nile Virus is known to be occurring only a small proportion of mosquitoes are likely to be infected. Even if a person is bitten by an infected mosquito, the chance of developing illness is approximately 1/200. People who are over age 50 are at greater risk of severe illness.

How is West Nile Virus spread?

West Nile Virus is spread by infected mosquitoes. A mosquito is infected by biting a bird that carries the virus. West Nile Virus is not spread from one person to another, or directly from birds to humans.

I've gotten a mosquito bite. Should I be tested for West Nile Virus infection?

No, most mosquitoes are not infected with West Nile Virus. See a physician if you develop the symptoms below.

What are the symptoms of West Nile Virus infection?

The disease may be mild or serious. Mild illness includes fever and muscle aches, swollen lymph glands and sometimes a skin rash. In the elderly, infection may spread to the nervous system or bloodstream and cause sudden fever, intense head-ache, stiff neck and confusion, possibly resulting in encephalitis or meningitis. Healthy children and adults may not have any symptoms.

What is the treatment for West Nile Virus infection? Is there a vaccine for West Nile Virus?

There is no specific treatment. Supportive therapy will be used in more severe cases. Most people recover from this illness. There is no vaccine.

How can West Nile Virus infection be prevented?

West Nile Virus can be prevented by controlling the mosquito population and protecting against mosquito bites.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

1. Eliminate mosquito breeding areas. Turn over or remove containers in your yard where rainwater collects, such as potted plant trays, buckets, or toys. Empty birdbaths once a week. Remove old tires from your yard. Clean roof gutters and downspout screens. Eliminate standing water on flat roofs, boats, and tarps.
2. Wear long, loose and light-colored clothing.
3. If possible, stay indoors when mosquitoes are biting.
4. Use insect repellent products with no more than 35% DEET for adults and less than 10 percent for children.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Something for Everyone: Lynchburg Parks and Recreation



Whether you're interested in the arts, sports, cooking or crafts, Lynchburg Parks and Recreation has a program for you. They also provide sessions on self-defense, self-improvement, financial planning, fitness, and a slew of other interesting topics.

The Parks and Recreation Department sponsors numerous day trips, adventure trips, and special events throughout the year. Located throughout the City of Lynchburg are twelve public parks, seven community centers for youth and seniors, and four outreach senior program locations that offer planned activities, special programs, and free play.

For a full list of programs, trips, special events, park and community center locations, and registration information, call the Lynchburg Parks and Recreation Department at 847-1640.

Guess Who's Moved Downtown?



The Department of Human Services and the Division of Social Services, formerly located at 2210 Langhorne Road, has moved downtown to 99 Ninth Street.

For your convenience, GLTC bus lines 1A and 1B will stop at the corner of Ninth and Commerce Streets.

Parking for clients and visitors will be available on site.

For more information, contact the Human Services Department at (434) 847-1551.

5th Annual Water Quality Reports Available Soon!

Lynchburg water utility customers will receive the Fifth Annual Water Quality Report in their June water bills. Copies of the report may also be picked up at one of the following locations:

Lynchburg Public Library (both locations: Plaza and Downtown), City Hall at the Information Desk and the Utilities Division's main office located at 525 Taylor Street. You will also be able to view the report on the City's web site, www.lyncburgva.gov. The City of Lynchburg is proud of the fine drinking water it provides. The annual water quality report shows the source of our water, lists the results of our tests, and contains important information about water. We are happy to show you how we have surpassed water quality standards. Should you have any questions, please contact Leslie Gryder, Utilities, at 847-1322.



Lynchburg Municipal Offices will be CLOSED Monday, May 26, 2003 in observance of Memorial Day.

Trash will be collected following the normal schedule and the Landfill will be open from 7:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Call Citizens First at 856-CITY (2489) for more information.